

Reward Charts

What is a reward chart?

- Reward charts are visual tools that can be used to support children to develop more positive behaviour (aged 3 years and above) - they can be a simple but powerful tool
- They can be used to motivate children to learn new skills such as sitting on the toilet or getting dressed independently
- They can be useful at home or at kindergarten
- They can also help discourage less desirable behaviour such as hitting other children (although the focus should always be on promoting the positives rather than extinguishing the negatives) see details below
- Often also called 'star charts' or 'behaviour charts'.

How does a reward chart work?

Reward charts are visual systems that allow children to earn stickers / tokens / magnets to put on their charts for engaging in positive behaviour, reinforcing a new skill or discouraging less desirable behaviours. These stickers / tokens / magnets can then be exchanged later for a chosen reward. They teach children how to work towards rewards by learning and practicing new skills and behaviours. It is not always easy to change our behaviour, so reward charts are a great way to keep children motivated and help them to become more aware of when they are doing a great job, or behaving in a more positive and desirable way.

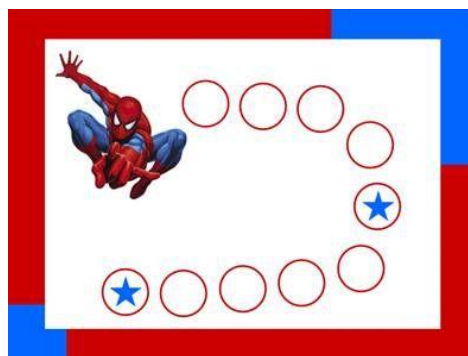
How do I introduce a reward chart?

- Decide on the format of the reward chart – you may decide to make it yourself, to purchase one, or to search the internet. There are a number of sites with templates that you can print off. (See below) For kindergarten age children start with a single row with only 3 or 4 steps for the child to complete before receiving a reward. As children get a little older, you can increase the number of steps before the child receives the reward.
- Think about the behaviour or skill you want the child to learn – be mindful to start with only one behaviour or skill – make sure that the skill or behaviour you want the child to learn is developmentally appropriate and achievable. For example, it is inappropriate for a three year old child to expect them to sit on the mat for a 20 minute period, or if your child is still in nappies, and you want him to 'do poos' in the toilet, it is inappropriate, given the stage he is currently at.

- Be specific about what you want your child to do. Make sure you give them a clear and concise explanation of the behaviour. For example, if a child is never sitting on the mat, and you believe they are developmentally ready to do that. The child could receive a sticker/ token / magnet for sitting on the mat for one minute. Start slowly and build on the skill; once the child is doing the skill or behaviour consistently; that is the time to increase the expectation.
- Skills / behaviours should also be phrased in a positive way; reward charts are used to teach and promote positive behaviour, so that children learn new and better ways of doing things. For example 'hands in your lap when travelling in the car', rather than 'no hitting in the car'.
- Consider how you can incorporate the child's special interests / motivators into the system – that can further motivate the child to engage in the process.
- Talk about the chart with your child, and make them part of the process. Discuss with them what the reward will be – keep in mind children don't necessarily need a reward that costs money. Rewards can be family outings, such as going to the park, going to a movie, or helping cook a cake or biscuits.
- Once the chart is ready, decide where you are going to put it and try to keep it in the same place so that your child can refer to it regularly and keep track of his / her own progress. Consider positioning it at the child's eye level.
- It is crucial that the token / sticker / magnet is given immediately following the desired behaviour; this is an important part of the learning process. Remember to give the child positive feedback at the same time, such as thumbs up or 'Hi 5' along with verbal praise, "You sat with your hands in your lap all the way to kinder, you did really well, here is your token / sticker / magnet".
- Please be aware, the reward chart is not a means of punishing your child. Once your child earns a token / sticker / magnet, it is inappropriate to take it away.
- Stick with it! Reward charts are not a quick fix or instant solution. When structured in the right way, aimed at an appropriate level for the child, and used consistently they can be a very powerful tool, try not to lose enthusiasm if you do not see instant results. (Changing behaviours or learning new skills takes time)
- Follow through with the reward as soon as possible after your child has received all the tokens.
- It's a good idea to change the reward regularly; consider having a 'bank' of possible rewards for your child to choose from

Please Note: It is important not to use the chart to bribe your child. It's inappropriate for example to say "If you don't clean up your room, you won't get a token / sticker / magnet", when the behaviour or skill you are teaching is unrelated to your child tidying their room. Always aim at keeping the reward chart process a positive experience.

Sample Reward Charts:



Reference: http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/reward_charts.html
http://www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com/theme_charts.htm
<http://www.rewardcharts4kids.com/reward-charts-by-character/>